

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 IO-14 PA-02 ISO-00 H-02
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DRAFTED BY NEA/P:WBHARRIS:RGH
APPROVED BY NEA/P:REUNDELAND
PA/PRS - MR. CARTER
H - MR. FLATEN
SSM - MR. MC ANDREW
NEA/IAI - MR. KORN
NEA/ARN - MR. DRAPER
NEA/EGY - MR. MARTHINSEN
NEA/ARP - MR. TWINAM

-----107520 050136Z /66

O 050024Z AUG 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
USMISSION SINAI
AMCONSUL DHAHRAN
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USMISSION USNATO
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AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE
SECDEF WASHDC 0000
JCS WASHDC 0000
CIA WASHDC 0000
NSC WASHDC 0000
USICA WASHDC
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS POUCH

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CINCEUR FOR POLAD, TEL AVIV FOR PAO, DELIVER BY 9 A.M.

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPN

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING FOR AUGUST 4

1. FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOLLOWING ARE
EXCERPTS FROM DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING FOR AUGUST 4, 1978.
FYI ONLY, SPOKESMAN TODAY WAS HODDING CARTER III.

Q. AS HE STARTS TO SET OUT FOR THE MIDDLE EAST, CAN YOU
TELL US WHETHER THE SECRETARY HAS ANY EXPECTATION THAT THE
EGYPTIANS CAN BE PERSUADED TO HAVE THE MINISTERIAL MEETING
HE THOUGHT HE HAD IN THE BAG TWO WEEKS AGO? AND CAN YOU
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TELL US WHAT HIS OBJECTIVES ARE? IN FACT, WHY IS HE
GOING, IF HE HASN'T GOT MUCH EXPECTATION OF RESUMING
NEGOTIATIONS?

A. I DONT THINK I REALLY WANT TO GO BEHIND THE SECRETARY'S
STATEMENT TODAY, WHICH HE HAS MADE TO THE HOUSE INTERNA-
TIONAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE, AS TO WHAT HE HOPES TO BE DOING
OUT THERE. I THINK IT SPEAKS TO IT. AS YOU KNOW, AS SOON
AS HE GETS BACK HE WILL BE REPORTING TO THE PRESIDENT.

Q. HAS THE STATE DEPARTMENT ANY PRIVATE ASSURANCES FROM
THE EGYPTIANS CONTRARY TO WHAT THEY ARE SAYING PUBLICLY
ABOUT A MINISTERIAL MEETING?

A. I WOULDN'T ORDINARILY GO INTO ANY PRIVATE ASSURANCES.
BUT LET ME SAY THAT I DO NOT KNOW OF ANY REASON TO BELIEVE
THE POSITION IS OTHER THAN WHAT HAS BEEN STATED BY THE
EGYPTIANS.

Q. YESTERDAY YOU DIDN'T HAVE EITHER CONFIRMATION OR VERY
MUCH NOTICE OF THE ISRAELI RETALIATION RAID ON SOUTHERN
LEBANON. DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING ON IT TODAY?

A. I THINK WE PUT OUT SOMETHING LAST NIGHT. BUT, IN ANY CASE, YES, WE DO HAVE CONFIRMATION THAT IT HAPPENED. I DONT HAVE ANYTHING MUCH TO OFFER ON IT EXCEPT THE CONFIRMATION OF IT.

I WAS ASKED YESTERDAY IF I HAD ANY COMMENT PER SE ON THE RAID. I EXPRESSED OUR STRONG FEELINGS ABOUT THE TERRORIST BOMBING. AS USUAL, WE DO REGRET THE ISRAELI RAID, WHICH HAS BEEN REPORTED AS AN ACT OF RETALIATION FOR THE TERRORIST BOMBING. WE REGRET IT FOR THE SAME REASON WE HAVE MENTIONED BEFORE, WHICH IS THAT IT IS A CYCLE OF VIOLENCE WHICH SIMPLY FEEDS ON ITSELF. WE DEPLORE, OBVIOUSLY -- WHICH IS WHAT I SAID YESTERDAY --
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ANY ACT THAT LEADS TO INJURY AND DEATH OF INNOCENT PERSONS.

Q. DO YOU KNOW IF AMERICAN AIRCRAFT OR WEAPONS WERE USED?

A. I DONT KNOW ABOUT THE AIRCRAFT SITUATION, WHAT AIRCRAFT WAS USED. ON WEAPONRY, WHAT SPECIFICALLY?

Q. BOMBS?

A. ON THE CLUSTER BOMB QUESTION, THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT HAS STATED PUBLICLY THAT THEY WERE NOT USED IN THIS ATTACK; AND WE HAVE NO REASON TO DOUBT THIS STATEMENT.

Q. WELL, THE FACT THAT YOU DONT KNOW IF AMERICAN AIRCRAFT WERE USED MEANS THAT YOU WOULDN'T CONSIDER IT GERMANE IF THEY WERE OR WERE NOT?

A. LET ME SAY THAT, ON THE QUESTION OF AIRCRAFT, I WILL TAKE A QUESTION AND SEE IF WE HAVE ANYTHING ON IT, BECAUSE I DONT WANT TO LEAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT SOMEBODY DOESN'T. I DONT KNOW.

Q. WHAT I'M GETTING AT, MORE THAN YOUR DETERMINATION OF WHAT KIND, IS IF IN FACT YOU ARE INTERESTED IN FINDING OUT AND IF NOT, WHAT EXPLAINS YOUR LACK OF INTEREST.

A. I THINK THAT WHAT I'VE JUST HAD TO SAY ABOUT THE RETALIATORY RAID IS THE EXTENT OF WHAT I'M GOING TO BE ABLE TO SAY ABOUT IT, INCLUDING THAT KIND OF QUESTION. WE HAVE SAID JUST ABOUT WHAT WE'RE GOING TO SAY ON THE SUBJECT.
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Q. HAS THE SECRETARY RECEIVED A LETTER FROM 13 SENATORS?

A. NO.

Q. YOU TOLD US AGAIN TODAY, AND WE'VE BEEN TOLD ALL WEEK, THAT WHEN THE SECRETARY COMES BACK HE'LL REPORT TO THE PRESIDENT. SINCE THIS IS THE NORMAL THING THAT A SECRETARY OF STATE WOULD DO IN ANY CASE, I'M WONDERING WHETHER THE REPETITION ON THAT FACT IS SETTING UP SOME KIND OF A DECISION AT THAT POINT BY THE PRESIDENT THAT WOULD BE ANNOUNCED.

A. I'VE SEEN VARIOUS KINDS OF SPECULATION TO THIS. IT IS MY UNDERSTANDING THAT WHATEVER MIGHT COME OF THAT REPORTING IS ENTIRELY DEPENDENT ON WHAT HE HAS TO REPORT. AND THAT IS DEPENDENT ON WHAT HE FINDS IN HIS CONVERSATIONS OUT THERE. I WOULD GUIDE AGAINST ANY NOTION THAT THERE WOULD BE ANY -- THAT I COULD SAY TODAY WHAT A SCENARIO WOULD BE UPON REPORTING.

Q. HE SAYS IN HIS STATEMENT THAT THE SITUATION IS AT A CRITICAL POINT. IS THE UNITED STATES REACHING A POINT THEN WHERE IT HAS TO REEVALUATE ITS FUNCTIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST NEGOTIATIONS? IS IT CRITICAL ALSO FOR OUR POLICY, AS WELL AS FOR THE SITUATION?

A. OUR POLICY, OBVIOUSLY, HAS ALWAYS BEEN AIMED AT BOTH DIRECT NEGOTIATION AND A COMPREHENSIVE PEACE SETTLEMENT AT THE END OF THE PROCESS. THEREFORE, THOSE THINGS, WHICH SEEM TO IMPEDE THAT ARE MATTERS OF CRITICAL INTEREST TO US.

AS TO THE FIRST PART OF YOUR QUESTION, I THINK THE SECRETARY SPOKE TO IT WHEN HE CAME OUT OF THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE. INSOFAR AS OUR OFFERING SOMETHING NOW, HE IS NOT GOING TO BE DOING THAT.

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Q. IS ISN'T GOING TO HAPPEN WHEN HE COMES BACK AND REPORTS TO THE PRESIDENT, OR YOU DONT WANT TO SPECULATE?

A. I DONT EVEN WANT TO TRY TO SPECULATE. WHAT HAS BEEN SAID BEFORE, AND WHAT I BELIEVE IS CONSISTENT, IS THAT AT ANY POINT THAT WE MAY OFFER SUGGESTIONS, IT WILL

BE AN ATTEMPT TO MOVE BETWEEN THE TWO PARTIES AND TRY TO BRING THEM TOGETHER ON AN APPROACH. THAT DOESN'T NECESSARILY CARRY WITH IT, BUT WOULD ALMOST CARRY WITH IT, THE IMPLICIT NOTION THAT THERE NEEDS TO BE TWO PEOPLE TALKING TOGETHER TO BRIDGE IT.

Q. DOES HE INTEND TO OFFER CARTER'S GOOD OFFICES FOR A SUMMIT?

A. I AM NOT GOING TO BE ABLE TO GO INTO WHAT HE IS GOING TO BE OFFERING OUT THERE.

Q. DOES HE THINK THAT SOMETHING ALONG THOSE LINES AT THIS POINT WITH SO MANY OPTIONS LEFT MIGHT BE HELPFUL?

A. I HAVE SEEN THAT SPECUALTION. I AM NOT GOING TO BE ABLE TO COMMENT. NOT COMMENTING DOESN'T CONFIRM OR DENY SUCH A NOTION. THERE ARE A WHOLE RANGE OF QUESTIONS THAT COULD BE ASKED, AND THAT IS ONE OF THEM. I AM NOT GOING TO BE ABLE TO ANSWER ANY OF THEM.

Q. IN HIS STATEMENT WHERE HE SAYS, "NEW EFFORTS WILL HAVE TO BE MADE AND, IF NECESSARY, WE WILL, AS WE HAVE OFTEN STATED, BE PREPARED TO PUT FORWARD SUGGESTIONS OVER SOME OBSTACLES." DOES HE MEAN AFTER HE GETS BACK TO TALK TO UNCLASSIFIED

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THE PRESIDENT?

A. IT IS MY UNDERSTANDING THAT HE MEANS AFTER.

Q. A COUPLE OF DAYS AGO YOU SAID THAT YOU WERE HOLDING DISCUSSIONS WITH THE ISRAELIS TO ALLOW THE LEBANESE ARMY TO TAKE THEIR PLACE IN THE SOUTH.

DO YOU HAVE ANY UPDATE ON THE RESULTS OF THOSE DISCUSSIONS?

A. I DONT HAVE ANYTHING NEW TO OFFER ON THAT RIGHT NOW. I NOTE THAT AS OF MID-MORNING IT HAD BEEN SOME TIME SINCE THERE HAD BEEN ANY SHELLING, OR THAT SORT OF THING. AS TO WHAT THE STATUS OF THE MOVE IS AT THIS MOMENT, I DONT HAVE ANYTHING NEW. VANCE

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